

Old Alabama State Capitol
Capitol Park
Tuscaloosa
Tuscaloosa County
Alabama

HABS No. AL-867

HABS
ALA
63-TUSLO,
21-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE Alabama	COUNTY Tuscaloosa	TOWN OR VICINITY Tuscaloosa
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Old Alabama State Capitol		HABS NO. AL-867
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Old Capitol		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) Facing E in Capitol Park, W end of Broad St. at 28th Ave.		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1828-1829	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) William Nichols	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) Alabama State Capitol, 1829-1846; housed Alabama Central Female College after		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Brick and Granite		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) Cross-shaped, approx. 120' x 80' overall (nine-bay front with three-bay advanced center pavilions front and rear, three stories, low parapeted hipped roof, dome		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Central pavilion embellished with Ionic columns, small one-story Doric entrance porches at N and S ends		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Central rotunda with flanking legislative chambers occupying upper two floors, Regency-like interior detail.		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Separate four-story dormitory erected to SW rear in 1861		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Entire complex destroyed by fire in 1923		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.)		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Jack Barker, Jr. HABS Historian		DATE June 8, 1983

ADDENDUM TO
OLD ALABAMA STATE CAPITOL
(Old Capitol)
Broad Street
Tuscaloosa
Tuscaloosa County
Alabama

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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ADDENDUM TO
OLD ALABAMA STATE CAPITOL
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HABS No. AL-867
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

OLD ALABAMA STATE CAPITOL
(Old Capitol)

HABS No. AL-867

Location: Childress Hill, 28th Avenue, between 5th and 6th Streets, Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama.

Date of Construction: 1827-1829

Description: Archaeological investigations under the direction of several local historical groups are currently underway to determine exact structural remnants.

Project Information: This report is based on written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

Historical Overview: From 1825 to 1846, Tuscaloosa served as capital of Alabama. State legislators moved the capital here due to severe flooding of the first site at Cahaba (1820-1825). Sited on a high bluff above the Warrior River at the terminus of steamboat navigation coming from the south and at the end of the Huntsville Road (called Broad St. in the 19th century and later University Boulevard) coming from the north, Tuscaloosa seemed well-suited for this choice. In 1827, stone foundations were laid and construction of the \$100,000 classically styled capitol begun. William Nichols of Philadelphia, the architect who designed the University of Alabama's early campus, also drew plans for this building. Complete with cupola visible throughout the early city and from the river, the Capitol opened its doors in 1829.

In 1846, legislators again moved the capital to Montgomery, the geographic center of the state. The Capitol Building at Tuscaloosa burned in the 1920s.

Sources Consulted

Site Visit, 8/12/91

Tuscaloosa Ct. Site Survey, 105